



Abstracta Iranica

Revue bibliographique pour le domaine irano-aryen

Volume 29 | 2008

Comptes rendus des publications de 2006

« Les célébrités du Janicule et les diplomates safavides immigrés à Rome », in : Michele Bernardini, Masashi Haneda and Maria Szuppe, eds., *Eurasian Studies [Liber Amicorum. Études sur l'Iran médiéval et moderne offertes à Jean Calmard]*. Vol. V/1-2, 2006, pp. 271-295.

Giorgio Rota



Édition électronique

URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/28652>

ISSN : 1961-960X

Éditeur :

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 15 mai 2008

ISSN : 0240-8910

Référence électronique

Giorgio Rota, « « Les célébrités du Janicule et les diplomates safavides immigrés à Rome », in : Michele Bernardini, Masashi Haneda and Maria Szuppe, eds., *Eurasian Studies [Liber Amicorum. Études sur l'Iran médiéval et moderne offertes à Jean Calmard]*. Vol. V/1-2, 2006, pp. 271-295. », *Abstracta Iranica* [En ligne], Volume 29 | 2008, document 205, mis en ligne le 15 septembre 2008, consulté le 03 mai 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/28652>

Ce document a été généré automatiquement le 3 mai 2019.

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- 1 Prof. Piemontese continues in his painstaking and most praiseworthy effort to bring back to light long-forgotten Italian sources for the history of diplomatic relations between Persia and the Italian states and of Oriental studies in Italy during the Renaissance and the Baroque periods. In this article, the Author publishes several documents issued by the Papal court and concerning the baptism and the later life of several members of the embassies led by Hoseyn-'Alī Beyg Bayāt (1601) and 'Alīqolī Beyg (1601) who converted to Catholicism in Rome. They help to contextualize better the question of conversion from Islam to Christianity (and the other way around) in the 16th-17th centuries, adding to our knowledge of a subject which is still poorly investigated, that is, the life of Muslim converts in a Christian society. From a more Iranological point of view, the Author sheds new light on the complex and tight relations connecting Papal-Safavid diplomacy with the birth of Iranian Studies in Italy and Europe ("Rome constitue à cette époque le centre initiateur des études persanes en Europe", p. 273), the knowledge and representation of Islam and the Muslims, the missionary effort in the age of the Counter-Reformation and

the hope to convert the Shah and his subjects. Finally, the Author highlights the connection between the Popes' diplomatic efforts towards Persia and the memory of Catholic saints of Persian origin.

- 2 A cycle of 27 frescoes portraying the life and miracles of St. Onofrio (who was, according to hagiographical tradition, the son of a Parthian or Sasanid king of Persia) was finished in 1600, while Pope Clemente VIII sent his first official diplomatic mission to Persia in 1601: the coincidence, if coincidence it was, is striking. Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini, nephew of the Pope and Secretary of State, gave the two envoys instructions where he mentioned the Persian martyr saints worshipped by the Catholic Church. Finally, it is worth recalling that Cardinal Aldobrandini was the last patron of Torquato Tasso, the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, a title which was also a hope and a political aim at the time. Finally, as is typical in Prof. Piemontese's works, the article has a rich bibliography.
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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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